



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Purdue University Student Promotes Sustainable Agriculture in Guatemala



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U.S. Borlaug Fellow Ian Pope conducts a survey with Mariano, a villager in Sebob, Guatemala.

Ian Pope is a Master's of Science candidate studying earth and atmospheric science at Purdue University in Indiana. His strong interest in agriculture and sustainability issues led him to apply to the [U.S. Borlaug Fellows in Global Food Security program](#), which provides grants for graduate students who are U.S. citizens to conduct food security research that contributes to the goals of Feed the Future.

Now in its second year, the program has awarded research grants to 45 students pursuing Master's or doctoral degrees, enabling them to pursue their research interests in over 20 developing countries. Borlaug Fellows also become affiliated with an International Agricultural Research Center or a National Agricultural Research System unit that will mentor them throughout their research projects.

After being named a Borlaug Fellow and attending the inaugural 2012 [Borlaug Summer Institute on Global Food Security](#), Pope began his research on sustainable agriculture in the Guatemalan cloud forest, investigating the role of deforestation, land tenure, soil erosion, and sustainable farming practices in impacting decision-making in agriculture. He is working under the mentorship of Dr. Jorge Faustino, a program leader at the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Center, which aims to reduce rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean by promoting sustainable management of agriculture and natural resources.

Pope's research combined geospatial analysis of cloud forests in the Sierra Yalijux and Sierra Sacranix mountain ranges of Guatemala with surveys and focus groups in several villages that illuminated patterns of deforestation and soil erosion in the region. Pope used a participatory approach in his research project, meaning that he aimed to not only collect and analyze data, but also to promote farmers' understanding of conservation and its impact on their livelihoods and food security. Guatemala's cloud forest is a high-priority area for conservationists, and Pope has worked with the local Community Cloud Forest Conservation NGO to educate farmers on agricultural practices that reduce soil erosion and environmental degradation that negatively impact food security for communities over the long term.

[Learn more](#) about the U.S. Borlaug Fellows in Global Food Security program. Applications for the next cycle of fellows will be due November 11, 2013.